Mrs. Assingham is right when she tells her husband that the Prince does net "really care" for Charlotte. There is no reason to dcubt the sincerity of the Prince when, after the golden bowl is broken, he tells Maggie, "You've never been more sacred to me than you were at the hour- unless perhaps you've become so at this one."[50] At the time he had seen the golden bowl with Charlotte, Maggie was sacred tc him, and she is new more so when he realises her inestimable qualities of the heart and spirit. It dawns on him that there is an order of goodness which triumphs, not by retaliation, not by revenge, but by love, understanding, patience and suffering.

Maggie quietly aiters the tenor of her life. She renews social activity with her husband, and, on one occasion, she visits the British Museum to read more about her husband's family history. Charlotte is made to feel the isolation gradually, although she does not know that Maggie knows everything. Maggie's capacity for self-criticism enables her to view her situation objectively. She realises that she had "abandoned" Charlotte and the Prince, and that she had "accepted passively the funny form*" of their lives. She is able to see Charlotte's situation also objectively and pity her. The perception of evil refines and strengthens her moral nature, bringing her best faculties into operation. The knowledge of the provisional absurdity of her married state awakens her to the ultimate sublimity of the state of love.

The terrace scene at the Fawns is important for the light it throws on the characters of Maggie and Charlotte. Adam Verver, Amerigo, Fanny Assingham, and Charlotte are playing the game of bridge in the smoking-room, and Maggie walks on the terrace observing the card-players through the windows. She observes, "the fact of her father sitting, all unsounded and unblinking, between them, the fact of Charlotte keeping it up, keeping up everything, across the table, with her husband beside her; the fact of Fanny Assingham, wonderful creature, placed opposite to them, and knowing more about

each,
probably when one came to think, than either of them knew of
either."[M] When Maggie observes this surface calm and harmony,
her first impulse is to expose the real natures of Charlotte and the
Prince, but she controls herself masterfully, because she had already
decided to bear everything "for love". Maggie is intelligent enough
to foresee the consequences of an explosive show-down with Charlotte
and the Prince. Such a move would permanently sever her relations
with them, and it would also cause her father great pain and
suffering.